



# *Jocassee Journal*

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges

Spring/Summer 2005

Volume 6, Number 1



Long Shoals Wayside Park alongside Little Eastatoee Creek on SC 11 in northern Pickens County is now a reality thanks to hundreds of hours of volunteer work. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

## **Long Shoals Wayside Park now open on SC 11**

Thanks to many hours of volunteer effort, a beautiful yet traditionally abused area along Little Eastatoee Creek is being transformed into Long Shoals Wayside Park.

Located in Pickens County along SC 11, east of Keowee-Toxaway State Natural Area, the Long Shoals Wayside Park is being coordinated by project co-chairs Dennis Chastain and Dr. George Smith, along with Paul Blessing, the site manager for Poe Creek State Forest. They are coordinating the efforts of various groups, agencies and volunteers working on the project, funded by a \$5,000 accommodations tax grant.

Work began on the new park in February, but the landscape of the area was literally transformed after just one day of work. The S.C. Association of Landscapers and Lawn Maintenance volunteered to do the landscaping work for the park, and provided 21 workers and a tree chopper. When they finished working, more than 100 trees had been cut and chipped and three cement picnic pads were laid.

Once complete, the park will span across about 10 acres of the Poe Creek State Forest, an 1,800-acre forest adjacent to the Jocassee Gorges property

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Picnic tables (left) and hikes along Little Eastatoee Creek are just a few of the many attractions for visitors to Long Shoals Wayside Park along SC 11. Trout anglers will also enjoy the new park, as DNR will regularly stock this portion of Little Eastatoee. (DNR photos by Greg Lucas)

## Little Eastatoee is main attraction of Long Shoals Wayside

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established by the S.C. Forestry Commission about five years ago. Visitors will be able to enjoy a picnic and view scenic Long Shoals on Little Eastatoee Creek. Restroom facilities, bear-proof trash cans, and an information kiosk are also planned for the site. A bicycle rack and three picnic tables are already located there.

The S.C. Forestry Commission donated equipment and labor needed to level the two parking areas and to build an access road to the stream. By early summer, volunteers hope to complete a loop walking trail from the parking area, to Long Shoals, and back up to the parking area. Dr. Walt Cook, retired forestry professor at the University of Georgia and a trail design expert, is volunteering to help with trail layout.

Trout anglers will also enjoy the new park. The

S.C. Department of Natural Resources will stock that portion of the Little Eastatoee on a regular basis. Both the S.C. Forestry Commission and

Partners for Trout, a coalition of public and private conservation organizations, have donated \$3,000 each to develop and improve trout stocking and angler access.

Organizations contributing to the Long Shoals Wayside Park effort include the Andrew Pickens Chapter of Cherokee Foothills Scenic Byways Organization; Pickens

County Council; City of Pickens; S.C. Forestry Commission; S.C. Department of Transportation; S.C. Department of Natural Resources; Carolina Association of Landscapers and Lawn Maintenance; Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Partners for Trout. ❁

*‘Visitors will be able to enjoy a picnic and view scenic Long Shoals on Little Eastatoee Creek.’*

# Jocassee Gorges recreation study is now underway

Hunters, anglers, boaters, wildflower watchers and other recreational users of Jocassee Gorges should be aware that Clemson University students may be asking some questions about their activities on the area in northern Pickens and Oconee counties now that a recreation use study is underway in the area.

The "Outdoor Recreation Use Survey of South Carolina's Jocassee Gorges," commissioned by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and conducted by Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, began when the gates opened at Jocassee Gorges March 20. The Jocassee Gorges survey, made possible by a grant through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, is scheduled to run through January 2007. Principal investigator on the survey is Clemson University's Dr. Bill Hammitt. Thomas Warren, master's student in Clemson's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, is project leader.

The purpose of study is to determine the scope of different outdoor recreation activities, participation rates and uses of the Jocassee Gorges area. Information from this research will be used to help the S.C. Department of Natural Resources better manage the Jocassee Gorges area.

"With the rate of participation in outdoor recreation activities increasing, it makes sense for management agencies like DNR to know their customers, as well as to understand the impacts of recreation on the resources of Jocassee," said Dr. Brett Wright, Clemson University professor and chair of the Department of Parks, Recreation and

Tourism Management. "Our students will seek to interview users of the Jocassee Gorges to better understand their activities, how frequently they use the area, and what they are seeking from these experiences."

"I run into people from all over the globe visiting Jocassee," said Mark Hall, DNR wildlife biologist and forest planner stationed at Jocassee Gorges near Rocky Bottom. "We get bear hunters from Canada to spring breakers from Michigan and California. Results of the study will help us understand what people are looking for from Jocassee and allow us to plan ahead for future changes."

Clemson University graduate students will be staged at various access points in Jocassee Gorges during the survey study period. They will ask recreational users a short list of questions about their activities, such as the location, duration, and types of activities in

which they are engaged. All answers will be kept in confidence, and participation is strictly voluntary. The survey will also include telephone surveys and traffic counts.

If you have questions about the Jocassee Gorges recreation use study, call the Clemson DNR office at (864) 654-1671, extension 22. ❁



**The many varied forms of recreation at Jocassee Gorges, such as kayaking here at the base of Laurel Fork Falls on Lake Jocassee, are being studied by Clemson University to help DNR better manage the property. (DNR photo by John Lucas)**



This aerial photo shows the Canebrake area of Lake Jocassee where the author and others found the remains of an old home place. (DNR photo by Tom Swaynham)

## Canebreak artifacts discovered during drought

By Dennis Chastain

It seems that the older I get, the more I come to realize how important serendipity is to the process of discovery. More often than not, it is when we are looking for something else, that we stumble onto the most significant finds.

During the height of the recent five-year drought, I found myself in a boat on Lake Jocassee with archeologist, Tommy Charles, and DNR Conservation Officer, Mac “Hound-dog” Erwin. The lake was down nearly 20 feet and a tremendous amount of shoreline was exposed for the first time in more than a decade.

We were cruising the shoreline along the farthest reaches of the Toxaway arm of the lake, an area

historically known as the Canebrake. Our goal was to search any exposed boulders to see if they might have petroglyphs, ancient Indian rock carvings. But, despite anecdotal reports that these curious carvings had been seen on boulders in the upper section of the Toxaway River, we found none that day along the recently revealed riverbed in the Canebrake.

As we were about to leave the area, Tommy Charles turned his keen eye to an unusual point of land consisting entirely of hard red dirt, very atypical for this former alluvial floodplain. Tommy said, “Hound-dog, how about pulling in over there. If

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# Legend on 'Fiddler Bill' continues to grow

Continued from page 4

anybody ever lived up here, that's where it likely would be." The site happened to be very near the point where the NC/SC state line crosses Lake Jocassee.

We stepped out of the boat and immediately discovered that the hard red clay was littered with artifacts of what appeared to be a house that had been burned. There were globs of molten glass, old hand-cut iron nails, pieces of china pottery, a few hand-made bricks, one Indian arrowhead and other assorted artifacts of civilization.

Thinking back through the many stories that I had heard over the years about one of the Canebrake's most celebrated residents, Will "Fiddler Bill" Chappell, something clicked. I realized that these were almost certainly the remnants of the famed house that Fiddler Bill had built for his wife, Eveline.

The story goes that old Fiddler Bill, (so named for his legendary skill in fiddle playing), had once told his wife that if they ever had an argument, it would be their last. Well, despite the fact that they had already enjoyed long happy lives in this remote paradise, and the fact that they had already raised nine children -- they had an argument. True to his word, Fiddler Bill decided that they could no longer abide in the same house. So he built her a cabin right on the state line, and one for himself farther downstream, near Cobb Creek.

The Eveline Chappell cabin was almost certainly burned as the waters of Lake Jocassee

backed up into this remote arm of the lake. If it had been left standing it would have stood half-submerged in the narrow channel, a serious danger to nocturnal navigation. Oh, what stories that old house could tell. The Canebrake, like the Jocassee Valley and the Horsepasture, was once a remote enclave of civilization in the midst of a true wilderness. Fiddler Bill Chappell was but one of the interesting characters who once lived there

or passed through on the way to somewhere else. Professor George Blackburn left an intriguing account of his stay in the Canebrake while surveying the state border in 1813. When the two-state boundary commission met to hash out what would become the boundary line separating the two Carolinas, they met at "McKinney's on Toxaway," read that, "in the Canebrake."

The stories are too varied and too rich in detail to tell here. In the next issue, we'll learn more about old Fiddler Bill Chappell, who died in 1949 at more than 100 years old, and his extended family, some of which also lived to see the century mark. We'll find out what happened when the

Toxaway dam broke and the effect the great flood of 1916 had on folks in the Canebrake. We'll learn how nearby places, such as Milksick Cove, the Auger Hole and the Devil's Hole got their names. We'll also explore the area around Toxaway Creek, which among other things, was the site of Preacher Cling Boren's liquor still. ❁

*(Dennis Chastain is a Pickens County naturalist and outdoors writer who has been hunting, hiking and fishing in Jocassee Gorges for more than 30 years.)*

# Education center hosts environn

## Piedmont Forestry Center now grows young minds

By Jerry Shrum  
S.C. Forestry Commission

*(Editor's note: This story is the first in an occasional series on Jocassee Gorges' neighbors.)*

The brown sign at SC Highway 11 reads: *Piedmont Forestry Center*. Curious visitors who follow the signs are ultimately rewarded as they descend into the Cheohee Valley, a beautiful rolling meadow framed by mountains and a wide triangle of sky. Once upon a time, rows of planted pine and hardwood seedlings filled the meadows. Seed were planted in the spring and fluffy, bright green, year-old seedlings were harvested in the winter, to be processed, packed and stored in the packing shed and cooler just around the bend.



In 1956, when the Soil Bank Conservation Reserve Program began funding cost-share incentives for reforestation, the S.C. Forestry Commission's only nursery, near Sumter, was not large enough to handle the demand. The Piedmont Nursery was constructed and began operations with the capacity to produce 30 million seedlings annually. By 1960 the Forestry Commission had four nurseries statewide and had increased seedling



Tree seedlings are prepared for delivery at the old Piedmont Nursery packing shed in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of S.C. Forestry Commission)



Clemson Extension agent Jason Caudill (left) leads a group during an Oconee Kids Environmental Education (OKEE) in Oconee County. The Center is a facility of the S.C. Forestry

production to more than 140 million seedlings. In 1968 the Piedmont Nursery and all its buildings were moved to the Cheohee Valley to allow for the flooding of Lake Jocassee. When the Forestry Commission began an intensive tree improvement program, the new Piedmont Nursery was ideally sited for white pine and Virginia pine seed orchards. Then, in 1973 a rare mountain tornado destroyed the orchards and buildings, and the Piedmont Center had to be rebuilt and replanted.

Tree planting tends to be a cyclical phenomenon, especially since the advent of cost-share programs. Planting peaks are followed by years of reduced demand, until those cost-share trees are ready for harvest and the demand for seedlings peaks again. Even as cost-share programs are cut back, the cycle continues, depending on markets, prices, and availability of lumber and pulpwood. In 1993 the Forestry Commission consolidated its nursery operations and the primary focus of the Piedmont site evolved from producing quality seedlings to

# mental programs, fishing rodeos



of Oconee County fourth graders in a wildlife lesson program at the Piedmont Forestry Center in northern Forestry Commission.

supplying high quality seed from its orchards. And today the building that once housed the packing shed assembly line and the seedling storage cooler has been transformed into a multi-room conference center, available for educational events, business meetings, conferences and retreats.

Growing young minds through education has taken the place of growing young seedlings at the Piedmont Center. The concept is still the same—you plant the seed of conservation and over time produce a mature individual that will hopefully make the world a better place. A variety of educational opportunities are being developed and conducted at the Piedmont Center. The Wood Magic Forest Fair, a forestry educational program designed for fourth grade students, was held for the first time at the Piedmont Center for a week in fall 2004. Volunteer instructors came from the Forestry Commission, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service, Clemson Extension and other organizations to teach fourth graders about the

value of trees and forests at this annual event.

Oconee County Clemson Extension Service also uses the Piedmont center to conduct its OKEE (Oconee Kids Environmental Education) program. This program provides outdoor experiences in forestry, weather, water, wildlife, soils and Native American culture. The Forestry Commission and DNR hold cooperative programs for all age groups at the Center. And, arguably the biggest event of the year for area children is the Fishing Rodeo held in June. DNR biologists and Forestry Commission personnel work together to protect and improve the trout stream that flows across the property. DNR conducts public dove hunts in the fall and the stream that dissects the valley is available for catch-and-release trout fishing. The meadows that once grew millions of tree seedlings are now filled with the golden glow of sunflowers in the summer. Numerous deer and flocks of turkey can be seen feeding in the open expanse of the valley. Seven hundred acres of forests, seed orchards and valley surround the Center.

In keeping with its philosophy of “multiple-use” the Forestry Commission is continuing to explore ways to utilize this unique asset and make it self-sustaining. The facility can be rented and can accommodate groups as large as 120 people. It presently has both large and small conference rooms, a large living room break area and a spacious, fully equipped kitchen. Outdoors is a family reunion-sized picnic shelter with water and electricity. A rustic cabin on the banks of the trout stream is available for small overnight groups using the facility and can house up to eight people. Housing for larger groups is available at local hotels and nearby Devils Fork State Park.

Future plans for the Piedmont Forestry Center are to add additional meeting room space, more housing, and to develop trails and other recreational opportunities. Visitors invariably comment that the serene beauty of the landscape and its private location make the Piedmont Forestry Center an ideal spot for business meetings, retreats, conferences, and training events.

*(For information regarding the use of the Piedmont Forestry Center or the Wood Magic Forest Fair contact the S.C. Forestry Commission at (803) 896-8892. Teachers in Oconee County can arrange OKEE classes by contacting the Oconee County Clemson Extension Service at (864) 638-5889 or visiting its Web site at [www.clemson.edu/oconee/local/jason/okee.htm](http://www.clemson.edu/oconee/local/jason/okee.htm))*



## Fire on the mountain

A picture-perfect backing fire creeps its way along during a prescribed burn on the Shooting Tree section of Jocassee Gorges in January. In the winter of 2005, DNR burned about 130 acres of planted loblolly pine woodlands that had been thinned in 2003. The prescribed fires reduced the potential for wildfire in the area, and habitat values for many species of wildlife will improve, since the understory vegetation will change from shrubby plants to herbaceous species. Prescribed burn plans were cut short this year due to weather constraints, and next year DNR plans to burn at least 150 acres of higher ridges along the Horsepasture Road. DNR plans to apply fire to about 200 acres of Jocassee Gorges each year in different ecotypes. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

# Gorges State Park in N.C. gets a little bigger

Gorges State Park in North Carolina recently added two new substantial tracts of land to the more than 7,500 acres that encompass the park.

Dedicated in 1999, Gorges State Park near Sapphire, N.C., covers more than 7,500 acres of the Jocassee Gorges in southwestern Transylvania County. Although there are no permanent facilities at the state park, the park registered more than 110,000 visitors in 2004.

The State of North Carolina has purchased a 188-acre Toxaway River Tract and a 80-acre Frozen Creek Road Tract. The park acquired the land in two separate transactions for about \$2.3 million. The purchase was partially funded by the Clean Water Trust Fund.

While it can be hard to find a place to park at

Gorges State Park, the state is working on a plan to add permanent parking as well as a 2.3-mile loop road into the park. The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund recently allocated \$2.96 million to begin the first part of a \$12 million master plan for the park. The initial work will involve putting in underground utilities, permanent parking and roads. Plans call for the park to eventually have a family campground with tent and RV spaces and a visitor center. Ultimately, there will be parking at Gorges State Park for about 500 vehicles.

Gorges State Park, which is adjacent to South Carolina's Jocassee Gorges, is a haven for rare species. Of the 125 rare species that exist in Western North Carolina, 46 of them inhabit Gorges State Park. ❁



# Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve trail to be reconstructed

The Heritage Trust Advisory Board approved funding to reconstruct a popular Jocassee Gorges hiking trail that was damaged by Hurricane Ivan, but the trail won't be ready for public use again until autumn 2005 at the earliest.

The trail at Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve in Pickens County—part of the Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges and managed by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—has been closed since September 2004 due to major damage from Hurricane Ivan. Numerous trees were toppled during the storm, and several slid down the mountain, taking the trail with them in several places. In some parts of the trail, all that is left is exposed rock, with cliffs above and below.

The Heritage Trust Advisory Board, which guides the DNR's Heritage Trust Program, approved funding from the Heritage Land Trust Fund to reconstruct the trail at its Feb. 3 meeting. Funds from the Heritage Land Trust Fund are derived from a portion of the real estate documentary stamp tax, which is paid each time a real estate transaction is made. The fund is used only for the acquisition and management of significant natural and cultural resources in South Carolina.

The trail reconstruction project is being bid out following state procurement guidelines, according to Mary Bunch, Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve manager and DNR wildlife biologist. A timetable for completion has not been established.

However, considerable work has already been done on the Eastatoee trail project. Bob Hester, an engineer with Duke Energy, helped with the bridge sites and improved the trail route, reducing the number of bridges from seven to five. Foothills Trail Conference volunteers Dave Alverson and Heyward Douglass helped clear an old road bed, along with DNR staff Rob Harrison, Jimmy Kluge, Ronnie Fleming, Ronnie Gravely, Chris Holcomb, Richard Morton, Tom Swaynham and Mary Bunch. As part of their Eagle Scout projects, Matthew VeHorn of Easley and Sebastian Vos of Clemson are building bridges on the trail. Foothills Trail steward John Bodine is also building one of the bridges on the new trail and will continue his routine maintenance work.

Trail design expert Dr. Walt Cook, retired University of Georgia forestry professor, has planned a new route for much of the trail. The newly rerouted trail will initially follow the original trail route, and then it dramatically diverges from the



Downstream from the camping area at Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve is The Narrows, where the stream funnels into a roaring chute only a few feet wide. Two species of filmy ferns, known nowhere else in North America, grow here. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

original trail but eventually links hikers back to the designated campsite alongside Eastatoee Creek.

The Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve Trail is a spur of the 76-mile Foothills Trail, which follows the Blue Ridge Escarpment in South Carolina and North Carolina between Table Rock State Park to the east and Oconee State Park to the west. About two-thirds of the Foothills Trail is within Jocassee Gorges, and the trail crosses all four major rivers that flow into Lake Jocassee—Toxaway, Horsepasture, Thompson and Whitewater.

"The new section of trail will include a much more gradual descent to the creek," Bunch said, "and it will be a vast improvement over the original trail and should reduce trail maintenance considerably." ❁



The picturesque view from atop Sassafras Mountain, the highest point in the Palmetto State at 3,560 feet, takes in three states: South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia. The summit is now owned by the State of South Carolina. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

## Sassafras Mountain peak now owned by state

The state now owns the summit of Sassafras Mountain, at 3,560 feet the highest peak in South Carolina.

State officials acquired two acres atop Sassafras Mountain in northern Pickens County in December 2004. The mountain lies along the South Carolina-North Carolina border off F. Van Clayton Highway. Hikers can already reach the summit, which is part of the 76-mile Foothills Trail between Table Rock and Oconee state parks.

The state purchased the land for \$50,000 from

Duke Energy Corp. Duke will continue to maintain a communications tower atop the mountain as part of the deal. The money to purchase the top of Sassafras

Mountain came from the state's Heritage Land Trust Fund, funded through a portion of the state's real estate documentary stamp tax.

Sassafras Mountain, in addition to being the highest point in South Carolina, also includes an important green salamander site at a granite outcrop that lies along the southern boundary. Other rare elements on the Sassafras

Mountain site include Appalachian sedge, pygmy shrew and Eastern woodrat. 

*'Sassafras Mountain also includes an important green salamander site at a granite outcrop that lies along the southern boundary.'*

# Crescent Resources repairs Jocassee Gorges access roads

The Musterground area of the Jocassee Gorges is much more accessible thanks to Crescent Resources. Crescent Resources, a Duke Energy company, recently repaired more than 12 miles of roads that provide seasonal public access to the area.

The Musterground area of the Jocassee Gorges in Oconee County is open from March 20 until May 10 and Sept. 15 thru Jan 1 of each year for public access. The northern portion of the area is owned by Crescent Resources and leased to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a Wildlife Management Area for public recreation. A portion of the area is owned by DNR as part of the Jocassee Gorges tract. The roads through the Crescent Resources portion provide access for the entire area.

The roads in the area have deteriorated over the years due to weather and vehicular traffic.

The Musterground area is remote and requires considerable effort to transport equipment for maintenance. Crescent Resources reshaped the road with heavy equipment and greatly reduced future problems by installing waterbars to route water from the roadbed.

"We greatly appreciate the cooperative relationship we have with all of Duke Energy's companies," said Mark Hall, DNR wildlife biologist and forest planner stationed at Jocassee Gorges near Rocky Bottom. "We have worked closely with

Crescent Resources and Duke Power to improve access to the Jocassee property for the public and for management needs.

"We are committed to environmental quality and setting good examples of how forest access roads should be managed. When the roads get in bad condition we have to shut them down until we can engineer them properly to eliminate environmental impacts, especially to our cold water resources," Hall said.

"The Musterground area of Jocassee Gorges is known for its natural beauty and exceptional public access to native wildlife," said Scott Munday of Crescent Resources. "We're pleased to contribute to its aesthetic value by enhancing the roads that lead to the area."

About 40 miles of main access roads on Jocassee are opened in the spring and fall for vehicular access through the wild, nearly 33,000-acre property. Hiking and non-motorized traffic are permitted year round.

Waterfalls, green salamanders, black bear, rare plants such as Oconee bells and many long-range vistas are just a few of the natural wonders that may be found in the Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens and Oconee counties. More information on the Jocassee Gorges may be obtained on the DNR's Web site at <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/wild/jocassee/index.htm> or by calling the Clemson DNR office at (864) 654-1671, ext. 22. ❁



## Geologically speaking

Dr. Bill Clendenin, state geologist, helps participants in an Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning at Clemson University Jocassee Gorges class plot geological information on a map during a field trip to Fishers Knob. The Lifelong Learning class offers six field trips to Jocassee Gorges during the spring and fall. For more information of Lifelong Learning, call Clemson University at (864) 656-6912. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)



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# Virginia Hawkins Falls dedicated alongside Foothills Trail

Virginia Hawkins Falls, a beautiful 25-foot cascade on Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve in Jocassee Gorges, was officially dedicated Dec. 18, 2004, with its namesake in attendance along with members of the Foothills Trail Conference. The waterfalls is located alongside the Foothills Trail in northern Pickens County.

Virginia Hawkins of Greenville, longtime Foothills Trail Conference executive secretary who recently retired from her post and was named a Foothills Trail Conference board member, attended the dedication along with members of her family. A large contingent of hikers from the Foothills Trail Conference made the one-

mile trek into Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve in Jocassee Gorges to officially dedicate the falls and

erect a custom-made wooden sign on the site. Virginia Hawkins Falls is nestled next to a classic example of an Appalachian Mountain cove forest, which features impressive wildflower displays during late March, April and early May.

The Foothills Trail is a meandering footpath of 76 miles that follows the Blue Ridge Escarpment and the South and North Carolina state lines between Table Rock and Oconee state parks, skirting the northern shore of Lake Jocassee and passing through Jocassee Gorges lands in both states. Spur trails add another 30 miles of diverse hiking experiences. For more information on the Foothills Trail or

to join the Foothills Trail Conference, visit the Web site [www.foothillstrail.org](http://www.foothillstrail.org).



**A handmade wooden sign marks Virginia Hawkins Falls along the Foothills Trail in Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)**